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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

protect this precious inheritance of beauty, to secure to these tribes their tribal customs and loyalties even while accepting and honoring their citizenship? Fray Marcos and the other Franciscans grafted their mediaeval Christianity on those precious customs and loyalties—built on them without destroying. Shall we be wise enough to do likewise?

But what has all this to do with modern poetry? Ah, much, and more, and still more! I was almost oppressed with the wealth of our inheritance—of our “tradition,” if you will. Why go to Greece or China, O ye of little faith? This South-west, which is but one chapter of our rich tradition, is our own authentic wonderland—a treasure-trove of romantic myth—profoundly significant and beautiful, guarded by ancient races practicing their ancient rites, in a region of incredible color and startling natural grandeur.

H. M.

THE DEATH OF MR. REEDY

William Marion Reedy is dead. A great journalist, an enlightened and progressive critic, a big, broad, human, deep-thinking, laughter-loving, generous-hearted man has gone over to the majority; and the thousands of friends who mourn his loss look around in vain for anyone to fill his place in the service of the higher letters and the higher politics in America.

Mr. Reedy, editing *Reedy's Mirror* in the centre of the Mississippi Valley, had a cosmopolitan mind, and a spirit

The Death of Mr. Reedy

which lived on familiar terms with all the big-minded democrats, all the men and women of light and leading, of yesterday and today. His talk belonged to the ages—he could have held his own in the Mermaid Tavern, or across the table from Dr. Johnson, or under the dialectics of Socrates, or at the Gargantuan feasts of Rabelais. Indeed, his spirit really belonged to more spacious times than ours—times with leisure in them, and mountainous rages of laughter, and keen pursuit of the idea through forests of entangling questions.

The St. Louis *Mirror*, under this exceptional editor, was the happy discoverer and first publisher, not only of the *Spoon River Anthology*, its most conspicuous *trouvaille*, but also of numerous other poems and tales by gifted men and women until then unknown. Mr. Reedy was a prodigious worker; his omnivorous reading, and his weekly long-hand writing of most of his paper, did not prevent his catching any golden gleam of talent in the literary ore submitted to him. Thus for many years the *Mirror* was an honorable refuge for progressive minds, a conspicuous leader in progressive literary art.

“Bill Reedy,” genial philosopher that he was, always “kept away from the little deaths.” He loved laughter, but he had no patience with cheap cynicism and facile humorous distrust—in short, with lack of faith in life. One of the latest issues of his paper—the *Mirror* for July 15th—contains certain *Reflections* which may well bear the emphasis of a great man’s parting word to the people of his time,

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and especially to his fellow-craftsmen. They occur in an editorial about *The Trained Seals*—"the group of special writers who wrote from San Francisco desperately humorous and cynical articles about the democratic convention;" all done "with a fine abandonment to every impulse to attribute every action of the politicians to the lowest possible motive."

Mr. Reedy points out that these expert observers "made a nice big mutual admiration society," "exchanging compliments with each other" which they denied to the politicians. And he concludes:

One can hardly refrain from reflecting that a people trained so to think of our political processes are in a fair way to get the kind of government they deserve. If there is any great danger to this government, in my opinion, it is to be found in just the cynicism cultivated by the "trained seals" rather than in the roaring and raving of the "reds." We can't get anywhere other than into trouble if we are going to mock everything and believe in nothing or nobody.

"*Reedy's Mirror* is the only paper of which I never miss an issue," said Carl Sandburg not long ago; "I have to know what Reedy thinks." He is only one of many—poets and others—who will feel this loss as that of a wise counsellor and a genial friend.

Edgar Lee Masters, who knew him much better than the rest of us, says:

He had climbed, and he stood naked and alone and tired upon the heights. His last letter to me contained these words: "I often think of what some old sage said—that immortality is a threat, not a promise. The best we can expect is rest."

I shall not look upon his like again.

H. M.